

Oct 21, 7:41 pm (Thompson drafter)

deliver one hour before speech, 7 pm Oct 22

Sir:

There is attached a copy of the statement I am making tonight ((change to: A copy of the statement I am making tonight concerning developments in Cuba and the reaction of my Government thereto has been handed to your Ambassador in Washington (prefer that K not have immediately available full text of statement: Oct 22, 11 pm))

. In view of the gravity of developments to which I refer, I want you to know immediately and accurately the position of my Government on this matter.

In our discussions and exchanges on Berlin and other international questions, the one thing that has most concerned me has been the possibility that your Government would not correctly understand the will and determination of the US in any given situation, since I have not assumed that you or any other sane man would, in this nuclear age, deliberately plunge the world into war which it is crystal clear no country could win and which could only result in catastrophic consequences to the whole world, including the aggressor.

At our meeting in Vienna and subsequently, I expressed our readiness and desire to find, through peaceful negotiation, a solution to any and all problems that divide us. At the same time, I made it clear that in view of the objectives of the ideology to which you adhere, the US could not tolerate any action on your part which in a major way disturbed the existing over-all balance of power in the world. I stated that an attempt to force abandonment of our responsibilities and commitments in Berlin would constitute such an action and that the US would resist with all the power at its command.

It was in order to avoid any incorrect assessment on the part of your Government with respect to Cuba that I publicly stated that if certain developments in Cuba took place, the US would do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies. Moreover, the Congress adopted a resolution expressing its support of this declared policy. Despite this, the rapid development of long-range missile bases and other offensive weapons systems in Cuba has proceeded. I must tell you that ~~that~~ the US is determined to remove this threat to the security of this hemisphere.

((change, Oct 22, 9:56 am: I must tell you that the US is determined that this threat to the security of this hemisphere be removed.))

At the same time, I wish to point out that the action we are taking is the minimum necessary to remove the threat to the security of the nations of this hemisphere. The fact of this minimum response should not be taken as a basis, however, for any misjudgment on your part.

I hope that your Government will refrain from any action which would widen or deepen this already grave crisis and that we can agree to resume the path of peaceful negotiation.

Oct 23; received 11:56 am

(Kuznetsov informed Kohler letter would not be published "for the time being.")

Mr. President.

I have just received your letter, and have also acquainted myself with text of your speech of October 22 regarding Cuba.

I would say frankly that measures outlined in your statement represent serious threat to peace and security of peoples. US has openly taken path of gross violation of charter of UN, path of violation of international norms of freedom of navigation on high seas, path of aggressive actions both against Cuba and against SU.

Statement of Government of US cannot be evaluated in any other way than as naked interference in domestic affairs of Cuban Republic, SU, and other states. Charter of UN and international norms do not give right to any state whatsoever to establish in international waters control of vessels bound for shores of Cuban Republic.

It is self-understood that we also cannot recognize right of US to establish control over armaments essential to Republic of Cuba for strengthening of its defensive capacity.

We confirm that armaments now on Cuba, regardless of classification to which they belong, are destined exclusively for defensive purposes, in order to secure Cuban Republic from attack of aggressor.

I hope that Government of US will show prudence and renounce actions pursued by you, which could lead to catastrophic consequences for peace throughout world.

Viewpoint of Soviet Government with regard to your statement of Oct 22 is set forth in statement of Soviet Government which is being conveyed ~~through~~ to you through your ambassador in Moscow.

Oct 23, 6:51 pm

Dear Mr. Chairman :

I have received your letter of Oct 23. I think you will recognize that the steps which started the current chain of events was the action of your Government in secretly furnishing offensive weapons to Cuba. We will be discussing this matter in the Security Council. In the meantime, I am concerned that we both show prudence and do nothing to allow events to make the situation more difficult to control than it already is.

I hope that you will issue immediately the necessary instructions to your ships to observe the terms of the quarantine, the basis of which was established by the vote of the OAS this afternoon, and which will go into effect at 1400 hours Greenwich time Oct 24. Sincerely,

Soviet Government statement, Oct 23

...The Sov Gov emphasizes once again that all weapons in the Soviet Union's possession are serving and will serve the purposes of defence against aggressors. Under existing international conditions, the presence of powerful weapons, including nuclear rocket weapons, in the Soviet Union is acknowledged by all the peoples in the world to be the decisive factor in deterring the aggressive forces of imperialism from unleashing a world war of annihilation.

...
The US Government accuses Cuba of creating a threat to the security of the US. But who is going to believe that Cuba can be a threat to the US? If we think of the respective size and resources of the two countries, of their armaments, no statesman in his right mind can imagine for one moment that Cuba can be a threat to the US or to any other country. It is hypocritical, to say the least, to say that little Cuba may encroach on the security of the USA.

((But suppose they put 200 missiles there. Sovs could easily and quickly put more MRBMs into Cuba than US had ICBMs or Polaris. Sovs were not being reassuring as to numbers. X

Were we considering question of numbers or significance?))

((If all weapons of SU are "defensive," then what is information content of statements that SU was putting "only" defensive weapons there? What was being ruled out? Form of statements certainly implied that something was being said about type of weapons, in response to US distinctions.

If ICBMs in SU are deterrent to aggression against Cuba, why need MRBMs in Cuba--especially controlled by Soviets?))

With regard to the SU's assistance to Cuba, this assistance is exclusively designed to improve Cuba's defensive capacity. As was stated on 3 September 1962...the SG has responded to the Cuban Government's request to help Cuba with arms. The communique states that such arms and military equipment are intended solely for defensive purposes. ((check))

...The US is demanding that the military equipment Cuba needs for its own defense should be withdrawn from its territory, a step to which no State prizing its independence can, of course, agree.

3.

Oct 25, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have received your letter of October 24, and I regret very much that you still do not appear to understand what it is that has moved us in this matter.

The sequence of events is clear. In August there were reports of important shipments of military equipment and technicians from the Soviet Union to Cuba. In early September I indicated very plainly that the US would regard any shipment of offensive weapons as presenting the gravest issues. After that time, this Government received the most explicit assurances from your Government and its representatives, both publicly and privately, that no offensive weapons were being sent to Cuba. If you will review the statement issued by Tass in September, you will see how clearly this assurance was given.

In reliance on these solemn assurances I urged restraint upon those in this country who were urging action in this matter at that time. And then I learned beyond doubt what you have not denied--namely, that all these public assurances were false and that your military people had set out recently to establish a set of missile bases in Cuba. I ask you to recognize clearly, Mr. Chairman, that it was not I who issued the first challenge in this case, and that in the light of ~~these~~ this record these activities in Cuba required the responses I have announced.

I repeat my regret that these events should cause a deterioration in our relations. I hope that your Government will take the necessary action to permit a restoration of the earlier situation.

Sincerely yours,

Oct 26, 1962: On K's conversation with W.E. Knox, Westinghouse Electrical International, Moscow, Oct. 24.

(conversation including Davis, Guthrie, Sheridan, Sonnenfeldt)

1. K was loath to think that what occurred on Oct 22 was done for electoral reasons. It appeared to stem from hysteria. The President was very young man; in fact K's own son was older. K had had his differences with Eisenhower but was confident that Eisenhower would have done things differently. ((! Why? How? note E recommendations))

2. Except in time of war a blockade is illegal. If the US stopped and searched Sov ships, this would be piracy.

3. K repeated several times that Sov ships were unarmed, that some may turnaround and that some would be stopped, but sooner or later the SU would send its submarines to sink the ships that were stopping the Sov ships.

4. The US is now unable to take over Cuba.

5. To Mr. Knox's comment that the President was infuriated because he had been assured that the SU would not send offensive weapons to Cuba and found that he had been lied to, K replied with a half hour discussion on the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons. ((Did he deny lying?)) The US said that its Turkish bases were defensive but what was the range of the missiles there.

6. K then stated specifically that the SU had an anti-aircraft missile in Cuba as well as ballistic missiles with both conventional and nuclear warheads. The Cubans were too temperamental to turn over these weapons to them; for this reason all sophisticated military equipment were under direct, 100 percent Soviet control. They would never be fired except in defense of Cuba and then only on the personal instructions from K as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. K added that if the US did not believe this it should attack Cuba and it would find out the answer. Guantanamo would disappear the first day.

((Note: significance of shootdown on 27 Oct in light of K's emphasis here and Oct 27 morning on his personal, and Soviet's responsibility. Also, concern for "temperamental" Cubans; and report that Mikoyan was representing concern for their action after Oct 28))

7. K would like to talk with the President. He had planned to attend the UN this fall, but the UN is a place for arguing, not a place for negotiating. He would be delighted to visit the Pres or for the Pres to visit him or a rendezvous at sea or anywhere else. A summit was desirable and it should not be a circus.

8. What occurred on Oct 22 was particularly disappointing because Rusk and Gromyko had practically agreed on the nuclear test problem, on the Polish-German and Czech-German frontier, and on non-dissemination of hostile propaganda in both East and West Berlin.

9 K told his familiar story about a man who had learned to get along with a smelly goat even though he did not like the goat. The SU had its goats in Italy, Greece, etc. and was living with them. The US now had its goat in Cuba.

Oct 27, 1962. Con, Aleksandr Fomin, Counselor; SOV--James Ramsey

long talk on evening of October 27. Mr. Fomin took a very gloomy view of the situation, saying it was fraught with all kinds of dangers. He complained that there seemed to be a lack of communications between our two countries on problems currently troubling us and suggested specifically that there should be more direct contact between Ambs Thompson and Dobrynin. He proposed exploratory conversations which would have as their objective a search for possible areas of compromise.

Max Fomin stated that the personality of the President was a factor which introduced great complications into the situation and possibly lay at the root of the trouble. He said that the Pres had a "do or die" attitude and quoted several instances of what he considered intemperate behavior on his part. These were: the feud with Broyhill in Virginia, the dispute with the steel companies, and the incident in Oxford, Miss. Mr. F expressed the opinion that the President need not have let such issues come to an open conflict since there had been other possibilities open to him for handling them. He drew an analogy between these examples and the White House's handling of the most pressing problems in which the USSR was vitally interested. Mr. F said that the President, being Irish, was very headstrong and determined to have his way at all costs. When queried as to what he thought would be the best way of reacting to the actions of a President such as he had described, Mr. F made some equivocal remarks which could be interpreted as indicating a lack of decision on this point.

Mr. F said that the Cuba for Turkey proposal should be considered as a serious offer. He stressed repeatedly that the USSR was seeking equality of treatment on the international scene and that the American people should now finally understand what it meant to have missiles of a foreign power pointed at their country from a neighboring state of minor dimensions. He said his government was flexible on the details of any agreement and would not be demanding in terms of a definite time period (he mentioned specifically a year for withdrawal from Turkey).

Mr. F concluded on the rather rueful note that the US was taking advantage of the SU's current dispute with the Chinese to advance its demands at a time inopportune to Moscow.

((F had had fiery talk with S that afternoon?))

(shown to Sec on 31 Oct; question whether remarks on Pres should be shown to White House. DR: This should not be sent to the White House. It has been overtaken by events. This ~~max~~ memo should have been in our hands within one hour after the conversation occurred.))

continued:

if this had failed, no use trying tougher one, in private let alone in public; 27 Oct letter--sent about 24 hours after 26 Oct letter, and after S reply to F (presumably, after receipt of F report in Moscow) may have been public probe, public in part because hope of generating public support for it (also, to speed delivery?)

((Sie: Rusk maintains emphatically that 27 Oct letter was a result of public suggestions by Lippman on 25 Oct and Kreisky (Lippman not available for reflection in Moscow in time for 26 Oct letter?))

(Note: US couldn't charge "bad faith" because even if they had been public, neither 26 Oct letter nor F or "question" could be described as a commitment to a definite offer. E.g., 26 Oct letter doesn't mention Turkey, but doesn't say that missiles would be removed, either. The "necessity" for them would disappear (not necessarily missiles)--~~xxxxxx~~ SU had denied necessity for them even before crisis, but had put them in anyway--but that could mean, they are then available for bargaining, e.g., against those equally "unnecessary" missiles in Turkey. The F offer, in contrast, was a specific trade, in which Turkey did not figure: but was purely hypothetical.

Acceptance of F offer did not bind K at all (or US); but it revealed acceptability of this to US, thus gave him strong basis for believing he could get at least this; in absence of this, he might not have felt free to spend time probing, in view of other signals.

Sou, Sie: tendency of ExComm officials to deprecate F-8 exchange in view of 26 Oct letter; but would that not have appeared quite ambiguous if the F offer were not available to make if specific? Note that our reply of 27 Oct is essentially to F offer, not to 26 Oct letter.

By sending F offer, K in effect got an immediate reply to his 26 Oct letter, read in a form favorable to US; in effect, he had US public reply of 27 Oct on the night of 26 Oct or early morning of 27 Oct: probably before sending 27 Oct letter. ((whereas public impression--and of how many members of ExComm, staff?)), he didn't get reply to either before he had sent both.

Big US decision of afternoon of 27 Oct was not to combine two letters but to ignore 27 Oct letter; meanwhile, threatening (as retaliation to Anderson, or to further shootdowns? Or, just as "retal" to failure to remove missiles? What was threatened, or ~~xxxxxx~~ implied? If Anderson stressed, this suggests action against SAMs; if missiles, missiles. What was feeling of ExComm about Anderson, and about implications of prior commitments about U-2s and political consequences of inaction. Was K "forcing our hand"? (See Sie account of Ball reaction)).

((

Oct 24, 1962 9:24 pm

Dear Mr. Pres.

I have received your letter of October 23, familiarized myself with it and am answering you.

Imagine, Mr. President, that we had posed to you those ultimative conditions which you have posed to us by your action. How would you have reacted to this? I think that you would have been indignant at such a step on our part. And that would have been comprehensible to us.

Having posed these conditions to us, you, Mr. President, have challenged us. Who asked you to do this? By what right have you done this? Our relations with the Republic of Cuba, like our relations with other states, regardless of what sort of state it may be, concern only the two countries between which those relations exist. And if one is really going to talk about a quarantine, referred to in your letter, it can be established according to accepted international practice, only by the agreement of states between themselves. And not by any sort of third party, there exist, for example, quarantines on agricultural goods and products. But in the case at hand, the question is in no way one of quarantine, but rather of far more serious things, and you yourself understand this.

You, Mr. President, are not declaring quarantines, but advancing an ultimatum and threatening that unless we subordinate ourselves to your demands, you will use force. Consider what you are saying! And you wish to convince me to agree to this! What does agreement with such demands mean? This would mean to guide oneself in one's relations with other countries not by reason but to indulge arbitrariness. You are no longer appealing to reason, but wish to intimidate us.

And, Mr. President, I cannot agree with this and think that in your heart you recognize that I am correct. I am convinced that in my place you would act the same way.

Reference to the decision of the Organization of ~~the~~ American States cannot in any way substantiate the demands now advanced by the US. This organization has absolutely no authority or basis to make decisions like that of which you speak in your letter.

Consequently, we do not recognize these decisions. International law exists, generally recognized norms of conduct exist. We firmly support the principles of international law, strictly observe the norms regulating navigation on the high seas and in international waters. We observe these norms and enjoy the rights recognized by all states.

You wish to compel us to renounce the rights that every sovereign state enjoys, you are attempting to legislate in questions of international law, you are trampling upon the generally accepted norms of this law. And all this not only out of hatred for the

Cuban people and its government, but also as a ~~consideration~~ result of considerations of the election campaign in the US. What morality, what law can justify such an approach by the American government to international affairs? You cannot find such a morality and such a law, because the actions of the USA with regard to Cuba are outright banditry, or, if you like, the folly of degenerate imperialism. Unfortunately, the peoples of all countries, and at least of all the American people, can suffer gravely from such folly, since the USA has fully lost its former inaccessibility with the advent of contemporary types of armament.

Consequently, Mr. President, if you coolly weigh the situation which has developed, not giving way to passions, then you will understand that the Soviet Union cannot fail to reject the arbitrary demands of the USA. When you confront us with such conditions, try to put yourself in our situation and think how the USA would react to these conditions. I do not doubt that if someone had attempted to dictate conditions of this sort to you, the USA, you would have rejected such an attempt. And we also say--No.

The Sov Government considers that violation of freedom of the use of international waters and international air space is an act of aggression, pushing mankind towards the abyss of a world missile-nuclear war. Consequently, the Sov Gov cannot give instructions to the captains of Soviet vessels bound for Cuba to observe the instructions of the American naval forces blockading that island. Your instructions to Soviet mariners are strictly to observe the generally recognized norms of navigation in international waters and not to retreat from them by even one step. And if the American side violates these rules, it must realize that sort of responsibility will rest upon it in that case. Of course, we shall not be simply observers of piratical actions of American ships on the high seas. We will then be forced for our part to take the measures which we deem necessary and adequate in order to protect our rights. For this we have all that is necessary.

Oct 26, 1962. delivered to Embassy 4:43 pm Moscow time; translated by Embassy; sent 7 pm Moscow time: received 6 pm Wash time; first part relayed to White House 6:30 pm. Second part received 8:27, relayed WH 8:45. Third part received 6:23, relayed WH 6:45 (apparent offer); Fourth part received 9 pm, relayed 9:15 (more specific offer)

Dear Mr. President:

I have received your letter of Oct 25. From your letter, I got the feeling that you have some understanding of the situation which has developed and some sense of responsibility. I value this.

Now we have publicly exchanged our evaluations of the events around Cuba and each of us has set forth his explanation and his understanding of these events. Consequently, I would judge that, apparently, a continuation of an exchange of opinions at such a distance, even in the form of secret letters, will hardly add anything to that which one side has already said to the other.

I think you will understand me correctly if you are really concerned about the welfare of the world. Everyone needs peace: both capitalists, if they have not lost their reason, and, still more, communists. People who know how to value not only their own lives but, more than anything, the lives of the peoples. We, communists, are against all wars between states in general and have been defending the cause of peace since we came into the world. We have always regarded war as a calamity, and not as a game nor as a means for the attainment of definite goals. Nor, all the more, as a goal in itself. Our goals are clear, and the means to attain them is labor. War is our enemy and a calamity for all the peoples.

It is thus that we, Soviet people, and together with us, other peoples as well, understand the questions of war and peace. I can, in any case, firmly say this for the peoples of the Socialist countries, as well as for all progressive people who want peace, happiness, and friendship among peoples.

I see, Mr. President, that you too are not devoid of a sense of anxiety for the fate of the world, of understanding, and of what war entails. What would a war give you? You are threatening us with war. But you well know that the very least which you would receive in reply would be that you would experience the same consequences as those which you sent us. And that must be clear to us, people invested the authority, trust, and responsibility. We must not succumb to intoxication and petty passions, regardless of whether elections are impending in this or that country, or not impending. These are all transient things, but if indeed war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war. I have participated in two wars and know that war ends when it has rolled through cities and villages, everywhere sowing death and destruction.

In the name of the Soviet government and the Soviet people, I

assure you that your conclusions regarding offensive weapons on Cuba are groundless. It is apparent from you have written me that our conceptions are different on this score, or rather, we have different estimates of these or those military means. Indeed, in reality, the same forms of weapons can have different interpretations.

You are a military man and, I hope, will understand me. Let us take for example a simple cannon. What sort of means is this: offensive or defensive? A cannon is a defensive means if it is set up to defend boundaries or a fortified area. But if one concentrates artillery, and adds to it the necessary number of troops, then the same cannons do become an offensive means, because they prepare and clear the way for infantry to attack. The same happens with missile-nuclear weapons as well, with any type of this weapon.

((This cuts both ways: i.e., against Sov assertion that missiles were "defensive," as well.))

You are mistaken if you think that any of our means on Cuba are offensive. However, let us not quarrel now. It is apparent that I will not be able to convince you of this. But I say to you: you, Mr. President, are a military man and should understand: can one attack, if one has on one's territory even an enormous quantity of missiles of various effective radiuses and various power, but using only these means. These missiles are a means of extermination and destruction. But one cannot attack with these missiles, even nuclear missiles of a power of 100 megatons because only people, troops, can attack. Without people, any means however powerful cannot be offensive.

How can one, consequently, give such a completely incorrect interpretation as you are now giving, to the effect that some sort of means on Cuba are offensive. All the means located there, and I assure you of this, have a defensive character, are on Cuba solely for the purpose of defense, and we have sent them to Cuba ~~xxx~~ at the request of the Cuban government. You, however, say that these are offensive means.

Second part:

But, Mr. President, do you really seriously think that Cuba can attack the US and that even we together with Cuba can attack you from the territory of Cuba? Can you really think that way? How is it possible? We do not understand this. Has something so new appeared in military strategy that one can think that it is possible to attack thus. I say precisely attack, and not destroy, since barbarians, people who have lost their sense, destroy.

I believe that you have no basis to think this way. You can regard us with distrust, but in any case, you can be calm in this regard, that we are of sound mind and understand perfectly well that if we attack you, you will respond the same way. But you too will receive the same that you hurl against us. And I think that you also ~~thinkxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ understand this. My conversation with you in Vienna gives me the right to talk to you this way.

xx This indicates that we are normal people, that we correctly understand and correctly evaluate the situation. Consequently, how can we permit the incorrect actions which you ascribe to us? Only lunatics or suicides, who themselves want to perish and to destroy the whole world before they die, could do this. We, however, want to live and do not at all want to destroy your country. We want something quite different: to compete with your country on a peaceful basis. We quarrel with you, we have differences on ideological questions. But our view of the world consists in this, that ideological questions, as well as economic problems, should be solved not by military means, they must be solved on the basis of peaceful competition, i.e., as this is understood in capitalist society, on the basis of competition. We have proceeded and are proceeding from the fact that the peaceful coexistence of the two different social-political systems, now existing in the world, is necessary, that it is necessary to assure a stable peace. That is the sort of principle we hold.

You have now proclaimed piratical measures, which were employed in the Middle Ages, when ships proceeding in international waters were attacked, and you have called this "a quarantine" around Cuba. Our vessels, apparently, will soon enter the zone which your Navy is patrolling. I assure you that these vessels, now bound for Cuba, are carrying the most innocent peaceful cargoes. Do you really think that we only occupy ourselves with the carriage of so-called offensive weapons, atomic and hydrogen bombs? Although perhaps your military people imagine that these (cargoes) are some sort of special type of weapons I assure you that they are the most ordinary peaceful products.

Consequently, Mr. President, let us show good sense. I assure you that on those ships, which are bound for Cuba, there are no weapons at all. The weapons which were necessary for the defense of Cuba are already there. I do not want to say that there were not any shipments of weapons at all. No, there were such shipments. But now Cuba has already received the necessary means of defense.

I don't know whether you can understand me and believe me. But I should like to have you believe in yourself and to agree that one cannot give way to passions; it is necessary to control them. And in what direction are events now developing? If you stop the vessels, then, as you yourself know, that would be piracy. If we started to do that with regard to your ships, then you would also be as indignant as we and the whole world are now. One cannot give another interpretation to such actions, because one cannot legalize lawlessness. If this were permitted, then there would be no peace, there would also be no peaceful coexistence. We should then be forced to put into effect the necessary measures

4.

of a defensive character to protect our interests in accordance with international law. Why should this be done? To what would all this lead?

Let us normalize relations. We have received an appeal from the Acting Secretary General of the UN, U Thant, with his proposals. I have already answered him. His proposals come to this, that our ~~xxx~~ side should not transport armaments of any kind to Cuba during a certain period of time, while negotiations are being conducted--and we are ready to enter such negotiations--and the other side should not undertake any sort of piratical actions against vessels engaged in navigation on the high seas. I consider these proposals reasonable. This would be a way out of the situation which has been created, which would give the peoples the possibility of breathing calmly. You have asked what happened, what evoked the delivery of weapons to Cuba? You have spoken about this to your Minister of Foreign Affairs. I will tell you frankly, Mr. President, what evoked it.

We were very grieved by the fact--I spoke about it in Vienna--that a landing took place, that an attack on Cuba was committed, as a result of which many Cubans perished. You yourself told me then that this had been a mistake. I respected that explanation. You repeated it to me several times, pointing out that not everybody occupying a high position would acknowledge his mistakes as you had done. I value such frankness. For my part, I told you that we too possess no less courage; we also acknowledged those mistakes which had been committed during the history of our state, and not only acknowledged, but sharply condemned them.

If you are really concerned about the peace and welfare of your people, and this is your responsibility as President, as I, as the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, am concerned for my people. Moreover, the preservation of world peace should be our joint concern, since if, under contemporary conditions, war should break out, it would be a war not only between the reciprocal claims, but a world wide cruel and destructive war.

Why have we proceeded to assist Cuba with military and economic aid? The answer is: we have proceeded to do so only for reasons of humanitarianism. At one time, our people itself had a revolution, when Russia was still a backward country. We were attacked then. We were the target of attack by many countries. The USA participated in that adventure. This has been recorded by participants in the aggression against our country. A whole book has been written about this by General Graves, who, at that time, commanded the US expeditionary corps. Graves called it "The American Adventure in Siberia."

We know how difficult it is to accomplish a revolution and now difficult it is to reconstruct a country on new foundations. We sincerely sympathize with Cuba and the Cuban people, but we are not interfering in questions of domestic structure, we are not interfering in their affairs. The SU desires to help the Cubans build their life as they themselves wish and that others should not hinder them

5.

You once said that the US was not preparing an invasion. But you also declared that you sympathized with the Cuban counterrevolutionary emigrants, that you support them and would help them to realize their plans against the present government of Cuba. It is also not a secret to anyone that the threat of armed attack, aggression, has constantly hung, and continues to hang over Cuba. It was only this which impelled us to respond to the request of the Cuba government to furnish it aid for the strengthening of the defensive capacity of this country.

If assurances were given by the President and the government of the US that the USA itself would not participate in an attack on Cuba and would restrain others from actions of this sort, if you would recall your fleet, this would immediately change everything. I am not speaking for Fidel Castro, but I think that he and the government of Cuba, evidently, would declare demobilization and would appeal to the people to get down to peaceful labor. Then, too, the question of armaments would disappear, since, if there is no threat, then armaments are a burden for every people. Then, too, the question of the destruction, not only of the armaments which you call offensive, but of all other armaments as well, would look different.

I spoke in the name of the Soviet government in the UN and introduced a proposal for the disbandment of all armies and for the destruction of all armaments. How then can I now count on those armaments? Armaments bring only disasters. When one accumulates them, this damages the economy, and if one puts them to use, then they destroy people on both sides. Consequently, only a mad man can believe that armaments are the principal means in the life of society. No, they are an enforced loss of human energy, and what is more are for the destruction of man himself. If people do not show wisdom, then in the final analysis they will come to a clash, like blind moles, and then reciprocal extermination will begin.

Let us therefore show statesmanlike wisdom. I propose: we for our part, will declare that our ships, bound for Cuba, will not carry any kind of armaments. You would declare that the US will not invade Cuba with its forces and will not support any sort of forces which might intend to carry out an invasion of Cuba. Then the necessity for the presence of our military specialists in Cuba would disappear.

Mr. President, I appeal to you to weigh well what the aggressive piratical actions, which you have declared the USA intends to carry out in international waters, would lead to. You yourself know that any sensible man simply cannot agree with this, cannot recognize your right to such actions.

6.

If you did this as the first step toward the unleashing of war, well then, it is evident that nothing else is left to us but to accept this challenge of yours. If however, you have not lost your self-control and sensibly conceive what this might lead to, then, Mr. President, we and you ought not now to pull on the ends of the rope in which you have tied the knot of war, because the more the two of us pull, the tighter that knot will be tied. And a moment may come when that knot will be tied so tight that even he who tied it will not have the strength to untie it, and then it will be necessary to cut that knot, and what that would mean is not for me to explain to you, because you yourself understand perfectly of what terrible forces our countries dispose.

Consequently, if there is no intention to tighten that knot and thereby to doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope, let us take measures to untie that knot. We are ready for this.

We welcome all forces which stand on positions of peace. Consequently, I expressed gratitude to Mr. Bertrand Russell, too, who manifests alarm and concern for the fate of the world, and I readily responded to the appeal of the Acting Secretary General of the UN, U Thant.

There, Mr. President, are my thoughts, which, if you agreed with them, could put an end to that tense situation which is disturbing all peoples.

These thoughts are dictated by a sincere desire to relieve the situation, to remove the threat of war.

Respectfully yours,

Comment on K letter of 26 Oct, 27 Oct, and JFK reply of 8 pm 27 Oct

1. K simply doesn't make any offer to withdraw missiles; he says that given commitment, ~~would~~ he would make commitment ~~not~~ that Sov vessels bound for Cuba ((at the moment? or indefinitely!)) would not carry weapons; and that there would no longer be any "necessity" for Sov specialists, or armaments. But SU had already said--on Sept 11--that they had no "necessity" for missiles on Cuba: with which we could agree. This is--evidently--not tantamount to saying that they wouldn't put them there, or once there, would take them out.
2. The Oct 27 letter is, in fact, quite compatible with the Oct 26 letter (though not with F-S exchange). If missiles were "necessary," then a trade with Turkish missiles wouldn't be acceptable, so far as Cuba were concerned. But if they weren't necessary...they were available for bargaining; removal of the Turkish missiles would justify the trouble of taking them out.
3. The JFK letter purports to read into the Oct 26 letter certain proposals--but these couldn't possibly be read into that letter. They just aren't there. This would be known not only to K but to anyone in Moscow who knew the K letter. If the ~~the~~ letter had ~~not~~ been published shortly, the effect would have been most peculiar. What JFK was really referring to was the F offer. (Did X explain this ploy in his interview with Y?)

Nov 6, draft reply to Nov 3 letter

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am surprised that in your letter, which I received yesterday, you suggest that in giving your representative in New York a list of the weapons we consider offensive there was any desire on our part to complicate the situation.

The ~~substantive~~ solution of the Cuban affair was established by my letter to you of Oct 27 and your reply of Oct 28. You will recall that in my letter of Oct 27, I referred to "all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use." You will also recall that in my broadcast address of Oct 22 that in addition to medium-range ballistic missiles, I mentioned specifically "jet bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons," as "an explicit threat to the peace and security of all the Americas." Finally, my proclamation of Oct 23 entitled "Interdiction of the Delivery of Offensive Weapons to Cuba" specifically listed bomber aircraft. These facts were all known at the time of our exchange of letters on Cuba. I cannot believe that there could have been any doubt in your mind that IL-28s, capable of carrying nuclear weapons, were included. ((In short: you are lying again!))

Your letter says--and I agree--that we should not complicate the situation by minor things. But I assure you that this matter of IL-28s, is not a minor matter for us at all. ((del: or any possible future matter of submarines)) It is true, of course, that these bombers are not the most modern of weapons, but they are distinctly capable of offensive use against the US and other West Hemisphere countries, and I am sure your own military men would inform you that the continued existence of such bombers in Cuba would require substantial measures of military defense in response by the US. Thus, in simply logic these are weapons capable of offensive use. But there is more in it than that, Mr. Chairman. These bombers could carry nuclear weapons for long distances, and they are clearly not needed, any more than missiles, for purely defensive purposes on the island of Cuba. Thus their continued presence would sustain the grave tension that the missiles, produced, and their removal, in my view, is quite as necessary to a good start on ending the recent crisis.

...I think I should go onto give you a full sense of the very strong feelings we have about this whole affair here in the US.

These recent events have given a profound shock to the relations between our two countries. It may be said, as Mr. Kuznetsov said the other day to Mr. McCloy, that the SU was under no obligation to inform us of any activities it was carrying on in a third country. But I cannot accept this view; I think you would not either, if the activities being carried on in a third country were such as to threaten a major alteration in the world balance of power upon which our present uneasy peace depends. ((preceding questioned; modified?)) And however one may judge that argument, the fact of the matter is ~~the~~ not only that we were not informed of what your Government was doing secretly in Cuba, but that active steps were taken to mislead us about what was being done.

I do not refer here only to the TASS article of September, but also to communications which were addressed to the highest levels of our Government through channels which heretofore had been used for confidential messages from the highest levels of your Government. Through these channels we were specifically informed that no missiles would be placed in Cuba which would have a range capable of reaching the US. ((Bolshakov?)) In reliance upon these assurances ((?)) I attempted, as you know, to restrain those who were giving warnings in this country about the trend of events in Cuba. Thus undeniable

2.

photographic

evidence that offensive weapons were being installed was a deep and dangerous shock, first to this Government and then to our whole people.

(delete following?) As you think about this matter, let me ask you to consider how you would have felt if the situation had been reversed and if a similar effort had been made by us in a country like Finland. If in Finland, or even Sweden, there had developed a government increasingly hostile to you and if then, during a very short period of time--while public and private reassurances were being given--there had been secretly sent to Finland a whole variety of dangerous means of destruction which were discovered only at the last moment, I am sure you know how the Soviet Government and people would have reacted. And that is how the action of your side in Cuba appears to us.

In the aftermath of this shock, to which we replied with a measured but necessary response, I believe it is vital that we should reestablish some degree of confidence in communication between the two of us. If the leaders of the two great nuclear powers cannot judge with some accuracy the intentions of each other, we shall find ourselves in a period of gravely increasing danger--not only for our two countries but for the whole world.

I therefore hope that you will promptly recognize that when we speak of the need to remove missiles and bombers, with their immediate supporting equipment, we are not trying to complicate the situation but simply stating what was clearly included in our understanding of Oct 27 and 28. I shall continue to abide fully by the undertakings in my letter of Oct 27, and specifically, under the conditions stated in that letter I will hold to my undertaking "to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba." This undertaking has already come under attack here and is likely to become increasingly an object of criticism by a great many of my countrymen. And the very minimum that is necessary in regard to these assurances is, as was agreed, the verified removal of the missile and bomber systems, together with real safeguards against their reintroduction.

I should emphasize to you directly, Mr. Chairman, that in this respect there is another problem immediately ahead of us which could very serious indeed, and that is the problem of continuing verification in Cuba. Your representatives have spoken as if this were entirely a problem for the Castro regime to settle, but the continuing verification of the absence of offensive weapons in Cuba is an essential safeguard for the US and the other countries of this Hemisphere, and is an explicit condition for the undertakings which we in our turn have agreed to. The need for this verification is, I regret to say, convincingly demonstrated by what happened in Cuba in the months of September and October.

For the present we are having to rely on our own methods of surveillance, and this surveillance will surely have to be continued unless a better and more reliable method can be found. We believe that it is a serious responsibility of your Government to insure that weapons which you have provided to Cuba are not employed to interfere with this surveillance, which has the full support of the Western Hemisphere.

I think we must both recognize that it will be very difficult for any of us in this Hemisphere to look forward to any real improvement in our relations with Cuba if it continues to be a ((delete: significant)) military outpost of the Soviet Union. We have limited our action at present to the problem of offensive weapons, but I do think it may be important for you to consider whether a real normalization of the Cuba problem can be envisaged while there remain in Cuba large number of Soviet military technicians, and major weapons systems and communications complexes under Soviet control, all with the recurrent possibility that offensive weapons might be secretly and rapidly reintroduced. In this connection in particular, we must attach the greatest importance to the assurance you have given, that submarine bases will not be established in Cuba.

In summary, I believe that Cuba can never have normal relations with the other nations of this Hemisphere unless it ceases to allow its territory to be used militarily by a foreign power from outside the Hemisphere and adopts a peaceful course of non-interference in the affairs of its sister nations. These wider ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ considerations may belong to a later phase of the problem, but I hope that you will give them careful thought.

In the immediate situation, however, I repeat that it is the withdrawal of the missiles and bombers, with their supporting equipment, under adequate verification, and with a proper system ~~xxxx~~ for continued safeguards in the future, that is essential. This is the first necessary step away from the crisis, to open the door through which we can move to restore confidence and give attention to other problems which should be resolved in the interests of peace.

((or, earlier: awayx from the crisis, and unless we take it promptly, I do not see how renewed action on our side can be avoided.))

Dec 11, 1962

Dear Mr. President:

It would seem that you and we have come now to a final stage in the elimination of tension around Cuba. Our relations are already entering now their normal course since all those means placed by us on the Cuban territory which you considered offensive are withdrawn and you ascertained that to which effect a statement was already made by your side.

That is good. We appreciate that you just as we approached not dogmatically the solution of the question of eliminating the tension which evolved and this enabled us under existing conditions to find also a more flexible form of verification of the withdrawal of the above mentioned means. Understanding and flexibility displayed by you in this matter are highly appreciated by us ~~xx~~ though our criticism of American imperialism remains in force because that conflict was indeed created by the policy of the US with regard to Cuba.

More resolute steps should now be taken to move towards finalizing the elimination of this tension, i.e. you on your part should clearly confirm at the UN as you did at your press conference and in your messages to me the pledge of non-invasion of Cuba by the US and your allies having removed reservations which are being introduced now into the US draft declaration in the Security Council and our representatives in NY should come to terms with regard to an agreed wording in the declarations of both powers of the commitments undertaken by them.

I believe that you already had an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the text proposed by us of a brief declaration of the Sov Gov in which the SU's main commitments resulting from the exchange of messages between us are formulated. We proceed from the assumption that an analogous brief declaration should be made by the US Gov and that the main US commitments resulting from the exchange of messages will also be fixed in it. Have a look, Mr. President, at this proposal submitted by us through your representatives in New York.

But notwithstanding what the agreement on the concrete texts of our declarations at this concluding stage will be, anyway the basic goal has been achieved and tension removed. I will tell you frankly that we have removed our means from Cuba relying on your assurance that the US and its allies will not invade Cuba. Those means really had the purpose of defending the sovereignty of Cuba and therefore after your assurance they lost their purpose. We hope and we would like to believe--I spoke of that publicly too, as you know--that you will adhere to the commitments which you have taken, as strictly as we do with regard to our commitments. We, Mr. President, have already fulfilled our commitments concerning the removal of our missiles and Il-28 planes from Cuba and we did it even ahead of time. It is obvious that fulfillment by you of your commitments cannot be as clearly demonstrated as it was done by us since your commitments are of a long-term nature. But it is important to fulfill them and to do everything so that no doubts are sown from the very start that they will not be fulfilled. I already told you at one time that our friends especially those of them who regard us with certain lack of understanding are trying to convince us that imperialism cannot be trusted, that is that you cannot be trusted, as a representative of such capitalist state as the United States of America.

2.

It goes without saying that you and I have different understanding of these questions. I shall not go into details as to what my understanding is because in this regard you and I cannot have common opinion since we are people representing different political poles. But there are things that require ~~diff~~ common understanding on both sides and such common understanding is possible and even necessary. This is what I would like to tell you about.

Within a short period of time we and you have lived through a rather acute crisis. The acuteness of it was that we and you were already prepared to fight and this would lead to a thermonuclear war. Yes, to a thermonuclear world war with all its dreadful consequences. We took it into account and, being convinced that mankind would never forgive the statesmen who would not exhaust all possibilities to prevent catastrophe, agreed to a compromise although we understood--and we state it now-- that your claims had no grounds whatsoever, had no legal basis and represented a manifestation of sheer arbitrariness in international affairs. We agreed to a compromise because our main purpose was to extend a helping hand to the Cuban people in order to exclude the possibility of invasion of Cuba so that Cuba could exist and develop as a free sovereign state. This is our main purpose today, it remains to be our main purpose for tomorrow and we did not and do not pursue any other purpose.

Therefore, Mr. President, everything--the stability in this area and not only in this area but in the entire world--depends on how you will now fulfill the commitments taken by you. Furthermore, it will be now a sort of litmus paper, an indicator whether it is possible to trust if similar difficulties arise in other geographical areas. I think you will agree that if our arrangement for settling the Cuban crisis fails it will undermine a possibility for maneuver which you and we would resort to for elimination of danger, a possibility for compromise in the future if similar difficulties arise in other areas of the world, and they really can arise. We attach great significance to all this, and subsequent development will depend on you as President and on the US Government.

We believe that the guarantees for non-invasion of Cuba given by you will be maintained and not only in the period of your stay in the White House, that, to use an expression, goes without saying. We believe that you will be able to receive a mandate at the next election too, that is that you will be the US President for six years, which would appeal to us. At our times, six years in world politics is a long period of time and during that period we could create good conditions for peaceful coexistence on earth and this would be highly appreciated by the peoples of our countries as well as by all other peoples.

Therefore, Mr. President, I would like to express a wish that you follow the right way, as we do, in appraising the situation. Now it is of special importance to provide for the possibility of an exchange of opinion through confidential channels which you and I have set up and which we use. But the confidential nature of our personal relations will depend on whether you fulfill--as we did--the commitments taken by you and give instructions to your representatives in New York to formalize these commitments in appropriate documents. This is needed in order that all the peoples be sure that tension in the Caribbean is a matter of yesterday and that now normal conditions have been really created in the world. And for this is necessary to fix the assumed commitments in the documents of both sides and to register them with the UN.

3.

You, Mr. President, do not want to agree with the five conditions put forward by Prime Minister of the Republic of Cuba Fidel Castro. But, indeed, these five principles correspond fully to the provisions of the UN Charter which is a legal basis for the relations among states, a sort of foundation for securing peace and peaceful coexistence. I will tell you frankly that such position of yours is surprising. Maybe you have some difficulties. But, Mr. President, we who occupy such responsible position in the world and who are endowed with high trust, have to overcome these difficulties. The peoples will appreciate that because for them it means ensuring lasting peace on earth.

It would like to express to you my disapproval of certain things. We read now various articles by your columnists and correspondents and we are concerned that in those articles they are widely commenting on the confidential exchange of opinion and it is being done by the people who as it ~~seems~~ would seem have to relation to confidential channels set up between us. Judging by the contents of these articles it is clear that their authors are well informed and we get an impression that this is not a result of an accidental leak of the confidential information but a result of benevolence for those people into whose hands gets the information they make public. This evidently is done for the purpose of informing the public in a one-sided way.

Frankly speaking, if we use the confidential communications this way, it will be far from facilitating confidence in those channels. You yourself realize that if your side begins to act in the way that our exchange of opinion by way of confidential channels will leak through fingers those channels will cease to be of use and may even cause harm. But this is up to you. If you consider that those channels have outlived themselves and are of no use any longer, then we also will draw appropriate conclusions in this respect. I tell you this straightforwardly and I would like to know your opinion on this matter. I have been denouncing American imperialism. But on the other hand I consider it useful for us to continue to maintain the possibility of confidential exchange of opinion because a minimum of personal trust is necessary for leading statesmen of both countries and this corresponds to the interests of our countries and peoples, to the interests of peace all over the world.

Let us, Mr. President, eliminate promptly the consequences of the Cuban crisis and get down to solving ~~the~~ other questions, and we have them in number. As far as nuclear test ban is concerned this is a minor question on the whole. I am going to address to you a confidential letter and proposals on this question and I hope that we will overcome difficulties existing in this question. The problem of disarmament is a different matter; it is a major and difficult question now.

But, of course, the main question is the German question and it is an easy and at the same time difficult one. I say that it is an easy and at the same time difficult question. But this is really so. It is easy because our proposals for concluding a peace treaty do not demand any concessions from either side, neither do they demand any losses from either side. These proposals only fix the situation which has developed as a result of World War II.

After the talks that our Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Gromyko had with your Secretary of State D. Rusk, only one question in effect remained unresolved--that of troops in West Berlin: troops of what countries, for what term and under what flag will be stationed there.

I would like you to understand me correctly on this question. Let us solve it. We will not escape the necessity to solve this question anyway. To tell the truth, this question is not worth an eggshell if a realistic approach is employed in appraising the situation in Germany where two sovereign German states have developed and if a course followed is aimed at an agreement on West Berlin and not at leaving it to remain a dangerous hot-bed of collision between states. Should really you and we--two great states--submit, willingly or unwillingly, our policy, the interests of our states to the old-aged man who both morally and physically is with one foot in the grave? Should we really become toys in his hands? By concluding a peace treaty we would lose nothing but we would gain a possibility to strengthen friendly relations between our states, would untie the knot in Europe which is fraught with danger for the whole world only because most extreme aggressive militarist forces in West Germany are interested in this.

Please excuse me for my straightforwardness and frankness but I believe as before that a frank and straightforward exchange of opinion is needed to avoid the worst.

Please, convey to your wife and your whole family wishes of good health from myself, my wife and my entire family.

December 14, 1962

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I was glad to have your message of December 11th and to know that you believe, as we do, that we have come to the final stage of the Cuban affair between us, the settlement of which will have significance for our future relations and for our ability to overcome other difficulties. I wish to thank you for your expression of appreciation of the understanding and flexibility we have tried to display.

I have followed with close attention the negotiations on the final settlement of the Cuban question between your representative, Mr. Kuznetsov, and our representatives, Amb. Stevenson and Mr. McCloy, in New York. In these negotiations we have tried to understand your position and I am glad to note that Mr. Kuznetsov has also shown effort to understand our problems. It is clearly in the interest of both sides that we reach agreement on how finally to dispose of the Cuban crisis. To this end, Amb. Stevenson and Mr. McCloy presented on Wednesday a new draft of a joint statement which by now has certainly reached you. I wish to assure that it is our purpose to end this affair as simply and clearly as possible.

You refer to the importance of my statements on an invasion of Cuba and of our intention to fulfill them, so that no doubts are sown from the very start. I have already stated my position publicly in my press conference on November 20th, and I am glad that this statement appears to have your understanding; we have never wanted to be driven by the acts of others into war in Cuba. The other side of the coin, however, is that we do need to have adequate assurances that all offensive weapons are removed from Cuba and are not reintroduced, and that Cuba itself commits no aggressive acts against any of the nations of the Western Hemisphere. As I understand you, you feel confident that Cuba will not in fact engage in such aggressive acts, and of course I already have your own assurance about the offensive weapons. So I myself should suppose that you could accept our position-- but it is probably better to leave final discussion of these matters to our representatives in New York. I quite agree with you that the larger part of the crisis has now been ended and we should not permit others to stand in the way of promptly settling the rest without further acrimony.

With regard to your reference to the confidential channels set up between us, I can assure you that I value them. I have not concealed from you that it was a serious disappointment to me that dangerously misleading information should have come through these channels before the recent crisis. You may also wish to know that by an accident or misunderstanding one of your diplomats appears to have used a representative of a private television network as a channel to us. This is always unwise in our country, where the members of the press often insist on printing at some later time what they may learn privately.

Because our systems are so different, you may not be fully familiar with the practices of the American press. The competition for news in this country is fierce. A number of the competitors are not great admirers of my Administration, and perhaps an even larger number are not wholly friendly to yours. Here in Washington alone we have 1200 reporters accredited to the White House alone, and thousands more in other assignments. Not one of them is accountable to this government for what he reports. It would be a great mistake to think that what appears in newspapers and magazines necessarily has anything to do with the policy and purpose of this government. I am glad to say that I have some friends among newspapermen, but no spokesmen.

But let me emphasize again that we do indeed value these confidential channels. I entirely share your view that some trust is necessary for leading statesmen of our two countries; I believe that it is important to build the area of trust wherever possible. I shall of course continue to hold and to express my convictions about the relative merits of our systems of government, and I shall not be surprised if you do the same.

In particular, we have been very glad to have opportunities for private exchanges with and through Mr. Bolshakov, and I am sorry to learn that he is returning to Moscow. It is our impression that he has made a real effort to improve communications and understanding between our two governments, and we shall miss him very much.

I appreciate your writing me so frankly, and in return I have ~~try~~ tried to be as straightforward, for I agree with you that only through such frank exchanges can we better understand our respective points of view. Partly for this reason I refrained in my last press conference from commenting on certain aspects of your speech before the Supreme Soviet with which you realize, of course, we could not agree.

We also are hopeful that once the Cuban crisis is behind us, we shall be able to tackle the other problems confronting us and to find the path to their solution.

I cannot refrain from commenting briefly on your reference to the German question, though I do not think that it would be useful in this message to expound our full position once again. But your suggestion that the interests of our two countries are toys in the hands of Chancellor Adenauer seems to me to miss entirely the true nature of the problem which confronts us in ~~Europe~~ Central Europe. For here the vital interests of many states are involved--on your side as well as ours. If this is recognized, then I am confident that a way can be found which will accommodate these interests and which will lead to a peaceful settlement. I cannot quite agree with you that Mr. Rusk and Mr. Gromyko have settled everything on Berlin but one issue. They are skillful and experienced diplomats, but I do not think we should give them too much credit yet. Still it is quite true, as you say, that the main issue which seems to separate us on Berlin is that of the presence of allied troops in West Berlin. I am confident that if you could bring from an understanding of our position on this vital point, our chances of making progress would be greatly improved.

3.

I look forward to receiving your confidential letter and proposals on the test ban question, and I think there is every reason to keep working on this problem. I hope that in your message on this subject you will tell me what you think about the position of the people in taking on this question. It seems to me very important for both of us that in our efforts to secure an end to nuclear testing we should not overlook this area of the world.

Thank you for your expressions of good wishes to me and my family, and let me in turn send you and your wife and family our personal good wishes for the coming year.